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CONFIDENTIALCENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Greenland (Davis Strait)
SUBJECT Unidentified Trawler-Type Vessels Sighted in
Davis StraitPLACE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)DATE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)

DATE (OF INFO.)

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DATE DISTR. 4 Jan 54

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SOURCE

[The Office of Naval Intelligence (DIO 1 ND #15-53) furnished the following
information to CIA for IAC dissemination in accordance with paragraph 3c of
NSCID#7.]

1. The ship left the US on 25 Jun 53 bound for Thule, Greenland, where she was to open ship lanes through the ice into the port. She was to base on Thule throughout the summer, keeping the lanes open, helping shipping and operating in nearby Greenland waters. She returned to the US on 2 Nov 53.
2. On 30 Jun 53, while northbound off the west coast of Greenland toward Thule, the ship was in Davis Strait, in the Great Hellefiske Bank area. At 1550 R (2050Z), and for just over three hours thereafter, it was in contact with five small unidentified vessels. Two - possibly three - were sighted; all five were clearly noted on the ship's radar.
3. At about 1600R, a picture was made of one of these vessels by the ship's photographer, from a height of 40 feet, using a K-20 aerial camera with a filter. No telephoto lens was available. There had been intermittent fog, and conditions were somewhat hazy. According to the ship's track, position at the time (67°N 55°50'W) was about 115 southward of Disko Island, and about 50 miles to the westward of Holstenborgs (see H.O. 5247), in 57 fathoms of water.
4. These small ships all seemed to be about the same size. Those sighted were similar in type, about 140-150 feet long, with high sloping bow, low freeboard, a high poopdeck, and two masts - one well forward, at the after end of the forecabin deck, the other immediately forward of the after deckhouse. There was a radio antenna, but no indications of opening up were noted. A blow-up of the photograph seems to show in vague outline some kind of gear a little forward of amidships, about the middle of the well-deck. This gear might have to do with fishing, although not located in the position usual for gallows frames on most US trawlers.
5. The vessels sighted had the look of trawlers, or possibly of small tankers. As

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they made frequent changes of course and speed, they were assumed to be fishermen; there were whales present, so they might have been "whale catchers."

6. At 1900R the US vessel changed course to keep well clear of one of these small vessels, and passed at a distance of about four miles.

Available for inspection and selection in Graphics Register is (a) an 8 x 10 print of the photograph referred to in para 3 above, and (b) a 12 x 3 1/2 blow-up (para 4 above) of the small vessel shown in (a). 7 Note: OMI has a copy of print (a). CIA accession numbers, [REDACTED]

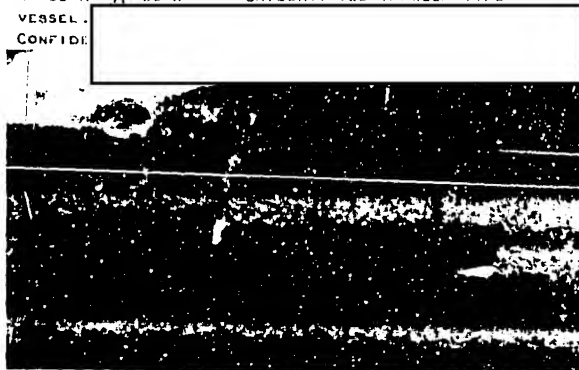
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GREENLAND SOUTHWEST GREENLAND DAVIS STRAIT
64 00 N 57 00 W UNIDENTIFIED TRAWLER-TYPE
VESSEL
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GREENLAND SOUTHWEST GREENLAND DAVIS STRAIT 61° 00' N 27° 00' W
UNIDENTIFIED TRAWLER-TYPE VESSEL. GREAT HELLELSKE BAY AREA, ABOUT 115 MILES SOUTH OF DISKO
ISLAND, 50 MILES WEST OF HOLSTEINSBORG. [REDACTED] 1955. CONFIDENTIAL [REDACTED]

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